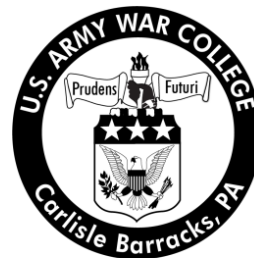


# Strategy Research Project International Fellow

## The Arctic Region: A Requirement For New Security Architecture?

by

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United States Army War College  
Class of 2013

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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Global interest in the Arctic will inevitably increase even more in the coming years. International interest in the Arctic will continue to rise in coming years as a growing number of states, corporations, civil society organizations and international organizations will engage themselves in the region. Although the Arctic Council and the United Nations are looking closely at many challenges facing the Arctic region in the years ahead, there is no official and permanent mechanism responsible for security related issues. The establishment of a structure or process that would look at security and defense challenges should be considered before the increase accessibility of the Arctic region becomes even more difficult to manage. This requires a solid, effective regional and global cooperation that constantly adapts to new opportunities and conditions. The Arctic Council emerges as the preferred organization to manage upcoming security challenges in the Arctic region.





## **The Arctic Region: A Requirement For New Security Architecture?**

There is a new world emerging above the Arctic Circle.

-Canadian Prime Minister Harper  
August 2008, Inuvik

The Arctic region is under constant transformations which bring a new set of challenges to the International Community (IC). The Arctic region is defined as the land and sea area north of the Arctic Circle. Some studies are suggesting that the Arctic sea could be free of ice during summer by the end of century. As the ice shrinks, new opportunities are emerging for trade and commerce but there are also important social, economic, environmental and security challenges<sup>1</sup>. In a world that is always looking for new sources of energy, the Arctic is often presented as the world's largest untapped natural reserves of hydrocarbons with various mineral deposits and new trade routes<sup>2</sup>. This future energy frontier will bring a new set of concerns that may develop into potential international or regional conflicts. Thus, new security challenges are appearing in the Arctic that could ultimately represent major challenges for many regional states, actors and international organizations. Unlike Antarctica, there is no comprehensive treaty protecting the Arctic or its resources and many observers argue that innovative security architectures should be considered promptly in order to fill the "security void"<sup>3</sup>.

Territories of eight countries are within the Arctic and these regional actors do participate in a consultative body called the "Arctic Council" but the council does not have the mandate to address military security questions<sup>4</sup>. Security remains exclusively a national responsibility and most Arctic countries do not want to submit security issues before the United Nations based on the argument that regional actors can find solutions

that are more adaptable to their regional problems. Some initiatives to discuss Arctic security issues have taken place over the past few years but nothing firm and permanent has been established as of yet. For instance, an International Conference took place for the first time in 2012 to discuss Security in the Arctic. The Arctic Chief of Defense Staff Conference was held in April 2012 and was presented as an opportunity to formalize Arctic Security and to create a forum for dialogue<sup>5</sup>.

Although, recognizing the low potential for armed conflict in the Arctic, it is pertinent to ask the question concerning the necessity to create a new security organization for the Arctic or simply to continue relying on the current diplomatic dialogue to face future security challenges for the region. The requirement to analyze the need to develop comprehensive security architecture for the Arctic should be considered in comparison with the current mechanisms in order to assess if these mechanisms are sufficient to face potential upcoming security challenges.

This document aims to present the issue of security in the Arctic by covering a vast range of issues that are pertinent to this region but mainly by addressing the fundamental question related to whether there is a need to improve the security architecture in the Arctic. This paper does not pretend to include a comprehensive review of all arctic challenges. In particular, this paper will not analyze the technical aspects of the different territorial claims but will rather focus on the need to address Arctic security challenges within a comprehensive framework. In light of this focus, this paper will bring forward the arguments concerning the necessity to create a new security organization or to adapt existing organizations and processes to be more

responsive with regard to the Arctic security agenda within a security cooperation structure.



Figure 1. Map of the Arctic region

Before addressing the security challenges facing the Arctic and how to address them, it is necessary to set the scene by reviewing the geopolitical significance of the region with a special emphasis concerning the resources potential of the Arctic. This regional overview will focus on the following items: geography of the region, impacts of the climate change, exploitation of the resources and, overview of the territorial claims.

### Geography

The Arctic covers more than a sixth of the Earth's total land mass plus the Arctic Ocean which the Arctic coastal states border<sup>6</sup>. There is no universally accepted definition of what the Arctic is or where its borders are located. The southern limit of the arctic region is commonly placed at the Arctic Circle (latitude 66 degrees, 32 minutes North)<sup>7</sup>. In general terms, the Arctic is predominantly an oceanic region plus the northern landmasses of its encompassing continents (see figure 1). More specifically, it

can be considered as the circumpolar region, including both marine and terrestrial systems extending southward from the North Pole, covering over 15 million square miles (about 8 percent of the Earth's surface) and home of a population of about 4 million<sup>8</sup>. Many different terminologies are used to describe the Arctic but the most commonly used are: North circumpolar region, the High North and, the Arctic region. Eight countries have territory north of the Arctic Circle: the United States (Alaska), Canada, Russia, Norway, Denmark (by virtue of Greenland), Finland, Sweden, and Iceland. These eight countries are referred to as the Arctic states and are members of the Arctic Council, an intergovernmental forum established in 1996. Of these eight countries, five have claim to arctic coasts<sup>9</sup>.

### Climate Change

It is generally recognized that climate change is warming the Arctic at a considerable rate, and this has focused the attention of the Arctic states' leaders, their public, and the world<sup>10</sup>. Not all scientists agree that climate change is the cause of these changes in the Arctic but the general consensus is that climate change increases average temperatures in the Arctic regions which, in turn, cause the ice cover to melt<sup>11</sup>. An increase in average annual temperature of just a fraction of one degree can transform a large expanse of highly reflective sea-ice into dark, heat-absorbing ocean water<sup>12</sup>. The expected impact of climate change is being intensely debated in many nations capitals and international forums. Scientists studying the issue have repeatedly been surprised by the rapid rate of change. Recent scientific evidence strongly suggests the Arctic is experiencing warming at a rate greater than almost any other region of the globe<sup>13</sup>. This suggests that the Arctic will be physically transformed even more rapidly

than previously thought. Arctic warming and its consequences have worldwide implications; an increase in glacial melt and river runoff, which will result in rising sea levels and the possible slowing of the world's ocean circulation system<sup>14</sup>.

Many scientific indications but also social indications tend to confirm that the Arctic is experiencing substantial global warming. For example, Northern populations have reported important climate change affecting the hunting season. It is generally accepted by the scientific community that open water areas in the Arctic would gradually increase to a few months a year between 2020 and 2050. Today the Arctic waters contain large amounts of sea ice making travel for shipping vessels very difficult but over time the reduced level of sea ice will facilitate navigation for shipping and will also facilitate navigation for exploitation of raw resources (ex. oil, mineral, fishing). Current data suggest that the Arctic would become more accessible to navigation as the level of ice declines every year and thus, opening shipping routes.

The increasingly accessible Arctic has and will continue to attract interest from different countries and international organizations (ex. UN, EU, NATO and China). Historically, the extreme climate and extensive ice cover prevented the outside world from entering the Arctic but this is changing now that the Arctic is melting. As its ice cover diminishes, the Arctic is becoming more accessible, which in turn will make it easier for the world to use the Arctic for shipping or resource exploitation<sup>15</sup>.

According to best current estimates, there has been year-round sea ice in the Arctic for at least 800,000 years<sup>16</sup>. Nevertheless, the average size of the polar ice sheet in September has dropped by more than 30 percent since 1979, when satellite records began<sup>17</sup>. Owing to historical data extending back to 1880 that show recent years as

being some of the warmest on record, predictions are that the Arctic will be free of summer ice by the end of the century. More abundant year-round ice had made these routes impassable, but in recent summers the annual ice melt has revealed new oceanic routes significantly shorter than traditional coastal Arctic lanes. Indeed, if predictions hold true that the polar icecap will completely disappear, then new sea lanes would traverse the North Pole itself. Irrespective of which polar sea lane is used (Figure 2: Northern Sea Route, Northwest Passage or the Transpolar Route), in comparison to a journey across more temperate oceans, routes through the Arctic are attractive because the distance traveled is significantly shortened<sup>18</sup>.



Figure 2. Arctic maritime shipping routes

## Resources and Trade

It is anticipated that by 2030 the global demand for food, water, and energy will grow by approximately 35, 40, and 50 percent respectively mainly due to an increase in the global population and the consumptions patterns of an expanding Chinese-middle class<sup>19</sup>. The reduced levels of sea ice would make navigation of the Arctic routes easier

for the extraction of oil, gas, and minerals. Also, tourism and fishing activities should increase. Until now, the Arctic has been easily protected and of limited strategic importance due to the ice that has shielded it, impeding both access and use. Now the ice is melting, creating new opportunities for the world but also, potential threats to national interests of Arctic states. There is vast potential for the Arctic to become incredibly lucrative region in terms of resources mainly oil, gas, minerals, and fisheries<sup>20</sup>. According to a 2008 U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), there is an estimated 90 billion barrels of oil, 1,669 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, and 44 billion barrels of natural gas liquids that may remain to be discovered in the Arctic<sup>21</sup>. The USGC estimates that the total of undiscovered oil and gas in the Arctic exceeds the total discovered amount of Arctic oil and oil-equivalent natural gas, which constitutes almost 10% of the world's known conventional oil-gas resources. These estimates have led to increased activity by Arctic stakeholders to establish territorial ownership in order to access these resources more easily. Many nations have invested in research and technology to discover the reach of their country's underwater continental shelf for possible exploitation of resources. As for minerals, receding glaciers expose previously ice-covered land ripe for mineral exploration and development. In addition to hydrocarbon deposits, the Arctic is also home to nickel, iron ore, and other rare earth minerals. Large commercial fisheries exist in the Arctic, including the Barents and Norwegian Seas north of Europe, the Central North Atlantic off of Greenland and Iceland, and the Newfoundland and Labrador Seas off of northeastern Canada<sup>22</sup>. However, as valuable as increased resources are, there are concerns that increased extraction and

production of resources in the Arctic could have lasting environmental consequences which would become an important security issue for many Arctic states.

Although the full extent of these resources (petroleum, mineral and, fisheries) is not yet fully known, each of the different Arctic states has made efforts to have access to these resources. In addition to large deposits of Arctic oil, gas, and other natural minerals, the Arctic Ocean is connected to several significant breeding areas of fish stocks, which are anticipated to move farther north as an apparent result of changes in Arctic water temperatures. Over time, transport shipping in the Arctic will certainly increase since the possibility of avoiding the Suez Canal has sparked strong interest in the future Asian beneficiaries of this new shipping lane, particularly China, Japan, and South Korea. Arctic ecotourism is another, but no less significant, factor that could play an increasingly important role in the economy of the Arctic region.

### Territorial Claims

Under International Law, no country owns the North Pole or the Arctic Ocean surrounding it. Regional countries are limited to an “Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)” of 200 nautical miles adjacent to their coasts<sup>23</sup>. Upon ratification of the UN Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), a country has ten years to make a claim<sup>24</sup>. The United States is the only Arctic state that has not ratified the convention yet.

Territorial disputes between Arctic stakeholders could limit access to resources and make maritime transport through the Arctic difficult. Currently, most claims focused on the reach of a country’s continental shelf and what is classified as international waters. All disagreements are part of the permanent dialogue, neither posing defense challenges for any Arctic states, as of now, nor diminishing their ability to collaborate



and cooperate with each other. The importance of the UNCLOS is critical for the upcoming deliberations as regards to exploitation of the resources which lie above and beneath the Arctic seabed.

The Arctic represents tremendous potential for many countries. New opportunities and challenges are emerging across the Arctic mainly due to the result of climate change and the search for new resources. The geopolitical significance of the region has never been greater and not only for Arctic states. As global commerce and economy are evolving, Arctic resources development will tend to grow even more quickly and attract other countries motivated by the vast reserves of natural resources. China is certainly one of the countries that have demonstrated an increased interest toward the Arctic by virtue of the potential exploitation of the resources and the shipping opportunities that it represents. While the opportunities are great, there are also considerable social, economic, environmental and security challenges. Some of these challenges have important international dimensions such as the establishment of conditions for sustainable development and protection of the environment. Over time, increased access to the Arctic will bring more traffic and people to the region<sup>25</sup> and therefore, exercising sovereignty over the Arctic is an important foreign policy priority for many countries. It is hard to overstate the importance of energy. Energy literally drives the global economy. Without question, the links between energy and security are significant and therefore, the Arctic region needs to be contemplated from a security perspective<sup>26</sup>.

## Security Challenges

In today's Arctic, security matters because of climate change, which is more apparent there than anywhere else on earth. There is a need for "policy planners" to appreciate the significance of the changes taking place in the Arctic region and the strategic consequences they will have for many countries including non-arctic states. National Strategy needs to be well-balanced without neglecting any capabilities but all Arctic states have different views and goals articulated in their national Arctic strategy. Although only few differences are considered as critical amongst all the countries, consensus is difficult to obtain when looking at national strategic interests. For example, in the case of the Arctic, Canada claims its right to exercise the powers of a sovereign State and also, that the legal concept of sovereignty is absolute<sup>27</sup>. Other states like Russia are concerned with the possibility of "competition" for resources that could develop into unnecessary tensions<sup>28</sup>.

The security challenges in the Arctic are vast, including search and rescue, environmental remediation, piracy, terrorism, natural and man-made disaster response, and border protection<sup>29</sup>. Arctic states (Russia, Canada, USA, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Iceland and, Sweden) have developed and issued national Arctic security strategies and accompanying documents that, albeit roughly, sketch out their political and security priorities in the region. These documents describe their national security interests and intentions these states wish to pursue and defend. Clearly, there is a need to understand the national strategy of the different stakeholders and their aspirations. The main interests to consider should include but not limited to: security, economic

prosperity, national values, and sovereignty. The following paragraphs will offer an overview of the different national strategy of the main actors.

### Russia

Russia's history with the Arctic has been a long one stretching over centuries and something that represents a patriotic symbol of pride for the nation. Russia has been steadily improving its military-security infrastructure, partly as a response to decades of neglect, but also as a reaction to the intentions of other member-states of the Arctic Five (Canada, Russia, United States, Norway and, Denmark), as well as those of non-member-states of the Arctic Five whose appetite for the world's resources seems to know few limits<sup>30</sup>. The fundamental national interests of the Russian Federation in the Arctic include preserving the Arctic as a zone of peace and security. However, Russia is very reluctant to see "outsiders" get too involved in Arctic matters and clearly does not support the growing involvement of NATO. Russia is very skeptical of an increased security role for NATO in the Arctic and Russia perceives NATO as a threat to international security<sup>31</sup>. Russia's position on the management of the Arctic is clear *"decisions about the conduct of affairs in the Arctic are taken by the Arctic countries, that is, those of the Arctic Council and any problem should be solved on the basis of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the decisions of the Arctic Council"*<sup>32</sup>. Furthermore, Russia has a strategic advantage in the Arctic with more than two-thirds of the energy reserves situated within Russian territorial waters.

### Canada

Canada's vision for the Arctic is of a stable, rules-based region with clearly defined boundaries. Canada encourages conflict resolution through bilateral relations

and regional mechanisms like the Arctic Council. Also, Canada recognizes the emerging interest of many other nations and international organizations but insists on the recognition that the Arctic states remain best placed to exercise leadership in the management of the region<sup>33</sup>. Canada does not anticipate any military challenges in the Arctic and believes that the region is well managed through existing institutions, particularly the Arctic Council.

#### United States

The United States strategic guidance on the Arctic is articulated in the National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 66 / Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) 25<sup>34</sup>. The overarching strategic national security objective is a stable and secure region where U.S. national interests are safeguarded and the U.S. homeland is protected. NSPD-66/HSPD-25 specifically identifies the freedom of the seas as a top national priority. It characterizes U.S. national security interests in the Arctic as “broad and fundamental” and states that the U.S. is “prepared to operate either independently or in conjunction with other states to safeguard these interests”. These interests explicitly include such matters as missile defense and early warning; deployment of sea and air systems for strategic sealift, strategic deterrence, maritime presence, and maritime security operations; and ensuring freedom of navigation and over flight<sup>35</sup>. NSPD-66/HSPD-25 advocates for international governance of the Arctic region through participation in international organizations that promote U.S. regional interests. The Arctic Council and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) are two such organizations, and are specifically mentioned in the directive. Additionally, the directive

requests Senate approval for accession to the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)<sup>36</sup>.

### Norway

The Norwegian High North Strategy's opening words state that "one of the Government's most important priorities in the years ahead will be to take advantage of the opportunities in the High North"<sup>37</sup>. The document set out new objectives for the Arctic, including: improve monitoring, emergency response and maritime safety systems; promote sustainable development; further develop infrastructure; and continue to exercise sovereignty firmly. Norway identifies the Arctic Council as the only circumpolar body and the leading political body for Arctic issues<sup>38</sup>. Norway also intends to step up its efforts to focus attention on its High North policy in European institutions such as the EU and NATO. The Norwegian Government has used the catchphrase "High North – low tension" to better present its approach in the Arctic.

### Denmark

Denmark's approach to security policy in the Arctic is based on an overall goal of preventing conflicts and avoiding the militarization of the Arctic, and actively helping to preserve the Arctic as a region characterized by trust, cooperation and mutually beneficial partnerships. Denmark's security policy states that existing international law and established forums of cooperation provide a sound basis for conflicts resolution and constructive cooperation in the development of the Arctic<sup>39</sup>. Denmark believes that the Arctic Council must be reinforced as the only relevant political organization that has all Arctic states and peoples as members<sup>40</sup>. Also, Denmark mentions the importance of the Arctic to "the Kingdom of Denmark" and its activities in the region including the use of

defense capabilities for civilian/military tasks like oil spill surveillance and fisheries inspections.

#### Finland

Finland's Strategy for the Arctic region reflects the strategic level interest that Finland has in the Arctic. Although not a primary player in resolving disputed territorial claims, Finland has a number of interests and concerns that characterized its overall strategy in the region. For Finland's Arctic policy, the foremost cooperation structure encompassing the entire Arctic region is the Arctic Council<sup>41</sup>. Finland regards the Arctic Council as the primary cooperation forum on Arctic matters and regards the current international treaty (ex. UNCLOS) as a sufficient regulatory basis to deal with Arctic issues. Finland is open to expanding the Arctic Council's activities to new sectors, like security, that would bring genuine added value<sup>42</sup>.

#### Sweden

The core of Sweden's strategy is to "ensure that the Arctic remains an area of low political tension" and that decisions are made in a multilateral forum that includes all interested parties<sup>43</sup>. Sweden seems adamant that the Arctic Council be the primary forum for Arctic discussions because it is concerned about being alienated from policy decisions by the Arctic coastal states (Russia, Canada, Norway, Denmark and, the United States)<sup>44</sup>.

#### Iceland

Iceland's Parliament has released a "Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy" in March 2011<sup>45</sup>. Iceland has declared the Arctic Council the most important forum for Arctic issues and if the Arctic Five becomes a formal platform for policy discussion to

the exclusion of Iceland that solidarity will be dissolved. Iceland also declares its interests in working against any kind of militarization of the Arctic.

#### Other Stakeholders

Furthermore to the Arctic states, many other stakeholders (China, the EU, NATO, etc) have expressed their interests and concerns for the Arctic using different international forums like the United Nations (ex. United Nations Environment Programme). At the present time, the EU, NATO and China are the predominant stakeholders who have expressed their vision for the Arctic.

#### European Union

The European Union acknowledges that it has no direct coastline on the Arctic Ocean but believes it is “inextricably linked to the Arctic”<sup>46</sup>. The EU preferred venue for all Arctic decision making is the Arctic Council and the EU seeks to become a permanent observer with a view to moving Arctic issues higher on the international agenda.

#### NATO

Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has reduced its activity in the Arctic region and has concentrated mainly on guaranteeing the inviolability of the air space. Four out of five arctic coastal states area in the Arctic are covered by the NATO treaty Article 5 regarding collective defense. Debate concerning the Arctic region has become present within NATO and some NATO countries would like to include a reference to the Arctic region in the strategic concept that guides the Alliance's activities.

## China

Even if China does not have direct access to the polar circle, the land of the rising sun is however heavily dependent on energy resources and transoceanic trade to continue its fast-paced economic development<sup>47</sup>. Presently, China is unable to project strategic power to the Arctic region and therefore, needs to concentrate its efforts in building influence through diplomatic cooperation with Arctic states and above all through large scale investment in the region<sup>48</sup>. China wants to take advantage of the Arctic region with its rich deposits of energy resources and has requested a permanent observer status at the Arctic Council. Also, China's investment in the European Arctic can be expected in the short and medium term, alongside measured diplomatic efforts to bridge cultural and strategic challenges<sup>49</sup>.

## Risk Assessment

Even if the potential for an armed conflict in the Arctic is assessed as low, the increased presence of ships and activities could become a security issue in the very near future. Research for recourses or conflict by proxy can impact the Arctic Region. An increasingly ice-free Arctic will certainly spur economic and shipping activity in the region; these developments carry the potential for political conflict as states compete for access to resources. Countries can always apply strategic capabilities to achieve national security objectives and "*Diplomatic, Informational and Economic*" capabilities are often cited as the main levers for the Arctic. Nowadays, defense capabilities are also referred to as a pertinent tool to achieve national objectives in the Arctic specially when considering military intervention capacities. Military build-up in the Arctic region is growing at different speeds. Some regional actors are placing the military at the centre



of their strategy to project power and exercise sovereignty. Concern over long-term regional security is fuelling a process of military modernization across the Arctic. The challenge that all stakeholders, but mainly Arctic states, are facing is one of balancing the risk of militarizing the Arctic and thus, creating the unwanted conditions for possible military engagements with the requirements to protect national interests in the region. The Arctic region faces “security challenges” not direct military “threats” but Arctic economic factors and increasing accessibility are causing a possible direct collision course, driving a clear need for a new paradigm to meet pressing security challenges that Arctic nations have thus far been unprepared or ill equipped to address<sup>50</sup>.

#### Management of Security in the Arctic

It is anticipated that megatrends like growing energy needs for oil, gas and, minerals will augment substantiality over the next few decades owing to an increase in global populations<sup>51</sup>. Over the next 15-20 years, as power becomes even more diffuse than today, a growing number of diverse state and non-state actors, as well as sub-national actors, will play an even more important governance roles. The increasing number of players needed to solve major transnational challenges – and their discordant values – will complicate decision-making<sup>52</sup>. The lack of consensus between and among established and emerging powers suggests that multilateral governance to 2030 will be limited at best<sup>53</sup>.

Increasing contention over resource issues could conspire to increase the chances of an outbreak of interstate conflict. In light of possible upcoming regional instabilities that could impact the Arctic region, the need to have a permanent forum or venue to discuss and negotiate security issues for the Arctic has become evident. Now,

is the United Nations (UN) the appropriate organization to address security issues in the Arctic region or is a regional organization like the Arctic Council sufficient? If it is recognize that improving security in the Arctic is inevitable then these questions need to be considered. The Arctic strategic rise is occurring against a general geopolitical environment that lacks formal security architecture or structured conflict-resolution process. The complexity of competing national security interests is heightened by the lack of a single coherent structure through which these concerns can be addressed. Creating twenty-first century security architecture for the Arctic presents a significant challenge for the International community (IC).

The rising strategic interest and activity in the Arctic region necessitates continued prioritization of a well-functioning international legal framework for peaceful cooperation, a special need for enhanced maritime safety, and persistent focus on maintaining the Arctic as a region characterized by peace and cooperation. Outside of the United Nations, there is no forum where regional actors can discuss security issues. Even if the Arctic Council is characterized as the primary organ for concrete cooperation in the Arctic, it does not presently have the mandate to discuss or negotiate security related cases – security remains a national prerogative for all countries. For instance, the Arctic Council has been instrumental in the development of a binding agreement between the 8 members' states on search and rescue (SAR). Like UNCLOS, the Arctic Council is unable to address any security issue because of its charter provisions<sup>54</sup>.

In a consideration of security in the Arctic, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) emerges as a natural candidate. Because NATO's Article 5 commitment – "an attack against one is an attack all" – extends to the Arctic, NATO has played and will

continue to play a role in the Arctic. But even some NATO countries like Canada strongly oppose to any NATO involvement on sovereignty grounds and, other NATO members are concerned with negative Russian reaction toward an increase NATO presence in the Arctic. However, in light of both its treaty responsibilities and the NATO-Russia dynamic in the Arctic, NATO could support the growing security challenges in the region in different ways by serving as a forum for dialogue, for example. The goal would be to maintain a military presence (NATO) that is sufficient to act as a stabilizing factor in conceivable crisis scenarios but without undermining stability through provoking short term and long term counter measures and the ensuing escalation of general tension. However, due to the Russian opposition and the lack of alliance consensus, it seems unlikely that NATO could take such a proactive role. The challenge for Arctic countries is to find a manner to engage non-NATO countries in a way that will contribute to the design of a security framework for the region.

There is definitively a strategic gap in the arctic region from a security perspective that needs to be addressed in order to establish conditions for peaceful resolution conflict when and where it will be needed.

### Recommendations and Conclusion

Arctic nations have yet to discuss seriously, let alone determine, what collective security framework Arctic states should use to address the emerging security challenges in the region, despite signing legally binding agreements on the international search and rescue and negotiating international agreements on oil spills and response. When states are confronted with emerging challenges, they either turn to existing international organizations and governing norms or create new organizational structures

to respond. Nonetheless, all stakeholders progressively recognize the need to initiate a dialogue on the vast array of security challenges that will inevitably arise in the Arctic.

In spite of the success of the Treaty of the Antarctic, the Arctic coastal states were resoundingly opposed to a new treaty, arguing that the Arctic, as an ocean surrounded by land, was well governed by existing international law, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and by the Arctic Council body. All Arctic countries clearly stated into their National Arctic Strategy that there is no need to develop a new comprehensive international legal framework to govern the Arctic region.

Stakeholders need to search for ways to fill this security void while also ensuring strong international cooperation in the Arctic by emphasizing the sharing of practical information on future environmental forecasts and evolving Arctic capabilities as countries adjust their security postures to a transforming Arctic. The principal step to fill this security framework vacuum would be to modify the mandate of the Arctic Council so that it can address security challenges. While the Arctic Council would play a dominant role in the Arctic security agenda, non-Arctic states that benefit from Arctic hydrocarbons and ice-free shipping routes will also seek a role. China is in the verge of becoming the number one economy on the planet and therefore, should be recognized with the status of permanent observer at the Arctic Council knowing that China has already invested major financial, scientific, and political capital in the region.

The Arctic states should consider adopting or adjusting the existing mandate of the Arctic Council to represent the current realities of the region and the forcible security challenges within a multilateral, multi-stakeholder approach. The Arctic Council should remain the center of the security framework with a constant interaction with other

organizations and countries. The comprehensive approach model (figure 3) illustrates the more challenging reality whereby the stakeholders of the Arctic region can maintain multinational and multilevel dialogues. This framework should provide the occasions for conflict resolution without use of force, strengthen core alliances (ex. NATO), increase leadership in multinational forum and, develop comprehensive partnerships without the need to create a new security organization.

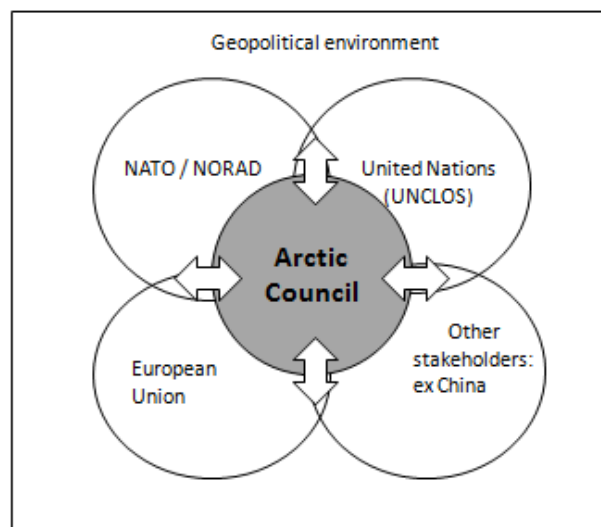


Figure 3. Comprehensive approach for security challenges in the Arctic

Global interest in the Arctic will inevitably increase even more in the coming years. Although the Arctic Council and the United Nations are looking closely at many challenges facing the Arctic region in the years ahead, there is no official and permanent mechanism responsible for security related issues. The establishment of a structure or process that would look at security and defense challenges should be considered before the increase accessibility of the Arctic region becomes even more difficult to manage. International interest in the Arctic will continue to rise in coming

years as a growing number of states, corporations, civil society organizations and international organizations will engage themselves in the region. This requires a solid effective regional and global cooperation that constantly adapts to new opportunities and conditions. The Arctic Council emerges as the preferred organization to manage upcoming security challenges in the Arctic region.

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